

Survey Assignment

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Survey Assignment

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Abstract

The following short paper is an analysis of a library survey conducted about the enjoyment of public libraries.

I believe that modern public libraries should be fun. Adults, children and young adults should get excited about coming to the library. If libraries are to survive the test of time, I believe that they need to be redefined into places where people want to congregate, socialize, learn, seek entertainment and knowledge as well as have equal access to all forms of information. When Internet access and bookstores take business away from the local libraries, it is time to think about how to gain the interest of the public, so that the public demands a strong public library with plentiful resources. The purpose of this survey was to find out if people think of the library as a fun place and how the library can become more “fun,” to patrons. “Fun” may sound too simple a concept for a place of learning, however who says that learning can’t be fun?

I created a survey of nine questions. I kept my language simple and free of library jargon. I wanted patrons ages 10+ to be able to pick up the survey and answer the questions quickly and efficiently. In addition, I prepared my survey for those who don’t go to the library to find out why they don’t go and what would attract them to the library more often.

The library has a stigma of being a boring place where librarians shush people from talking. The modern public library is trying to break free of this stigma in order to meet the needs of a more modern society that embraces technology and learning through many different forms of media. Interactive and distance learning, movies, music, audio books and software are some of the modes of learning that we should expect from a contemporary public library.

The results of my survey were not surprising, however I wish that I could have surveyed more than nine people! I would love to refine this survey and find a way to get it out to the world! Of the nine people I surveyed, only one person said that they would not describe their library as fun. I am very happy to see this result, however I know that the results are biased, based on them being taken from fellow library science students who I can assume, like their library.

The results that surprised me the most were to question #5, “Would you come to any of these activities at the library?” Fifty percent of those surveyed said that they would attend an exercise class at the library! I believe this is further evidence that a library as a community center is a justified transition for modern libraries. People don’t just want to better their brains; they also understand the importance of improving their health. However, I did have one naysayer who wrote an open-ended response as to why they wouldn’t attend exercise, concerts or theater at the local library, “Because that’s just weird. It’s a library, not a community center/gym/movie theatre/concert hall.” I found this response amusing and telling of possible resistance to change of the traditional library format. See below:

I don't play games and am not interested in Tech
2/27/11 2:14AM [View Responses](#)

I do not play video games much, so I would skip that club.
2/27/11 2:22AM [View Responses](#)

Would usually look elsewhere for these activities.
2/27/11 4:00AM [View Responses](#)

I'm not interested in the activities I marked "no" on.
2/27/11 11:29PM [View Responses](#)

Not of interest to me.
2/28/11 12:36AM [View Responses](#)

Becasue that's just weird. It's a library, not a community center/gym/movie theatre/concert hall.
2/28/11 9:58PM [View Responses](#)

In general, it seems as though my nine survey participants like their library, but think it can be bettered in some ways. In my survey I asked participants what other activities would make them want to come to the library more often. The answers were telling. More than half of the participants want a café in their library! See below:

Coffee bar with a kids learning center!
2/27/11 1:20AM View Responses
A comfortable place to read and eat.
2/27/11 1:32AM View Responses
food!
2/27/11 1:37AM View Responses
More access to recent releases and also activities that were for my age group. Most seem to be for kids or elderly people. What about all of us in the middle?
2/27/11 2:14AM View Responses
More open space, and more activities might help make it more popular for my age group.
2/27/11 2:22AM View Responses
More arts and craft
2/27/11 4:00AM View Responses
More comfortable furniture and more quiet rooms.
2/27/11 11:29PM View Responses
Cafe, meeting area, quiet reading area
2/28/11 12:36AM View Responses
A cafe would be really nice. Great programs for our kids and something for us moms.
2/28/11 4:12AM View Responses
More and better lighting. Better seating and desks. Cleaner bathrooms. More distance from children's areas.
2/28/11 9:58PM View Responses

What I found when answering surveys of my fellow classmates that some surveys had questions that were too tedious for library patrons, such as myself. Library patrons will become frustrated and not complete the survey if the questions are too difficult or time consuming. The questions also need to have importance to the patrons. I found that I wanted to skip a lot of questions on other surveys because the issue was not relevant to me or it didn't feel important enough for me to have to write an open-ended answer to. Some of the scaled-response questions contained too many options, making it difficult to choose a place on the scale.

In order to improve my survey, I would add more questions and come up with more options for activities. There were several options suggested to me by the participants that I did not include. (Probably due to my own personal activity biases) I didn't put many physically active events on it, so I would be sure to include physical activities. I would further refine the simplicity of the questions and make sure not to assume that participants have the time to fill out a giant survey. I would pick my questions very wisely, knowing that patrons might skip those that they don't care about.

In conclusion, I am going to refine my survey and put it up on my personal live website to try and get more results and feedback over time because I think this is an important issue for the longevity and popularity of public libraries. Stay tuned!

Survey Data:

thejamiedavis

Sign Out

Help

My Surveys

Address Book

My Account

Plans & Pricing

+ Create Survey

You have a **BASIC** account

|

To remove the limits of a BASIC account and get unlimited questions, [upgrade now!](#)

Is Your Library Fun?

Edit

Default Report

+ Add Report

Response Summary

Total Started Survey: 10
Total Completed Survey: 10 (100%)

PAGE:

1. Would you describe your library as fun?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	88.9%	8
No	11.1%	1
answered question		9
skipped question		1

2. How often do you go to the library?

Create Chart

Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
More than 5 times a month	33.3%	3
3-5 times a month	11.1%	1
1-2 times a month	44.4%	4
Never/Hardly	11.1%	1
Other (please specify) Show Responses		1
answered question		9
skipped question		1

3. Please rate the following areas of the library by importance to you.

Create Chart

Download

	Important	Moderately Important	Not Important	Rating Average	Response Count
Non-Fiction	60.0% (6)	30.0% (3)	10.0% (1)	1.50	10
Fiction	70.0% (7)	20.0% (2)	10.0% (1)	1.40	10
Children	60.0% (6)	0.0% (0)	40.0% (4)	1.80	10
Young Adult	30.0% (3)	30.0% (3)	40.0% (4)	2.10	10
Public Spaces	80.0% (8)	20.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	1.20	10
Quiet Study Room	77.8% (7)	0.0% (0)	22.2% (2)	1.44	9
Cafe Area	30.0% (3)	60.0% (6)	10.0% (1)	1.80	10
answered question					10

		skipped question		0
4. What is your age?		Create Chart	Download	
		Response Percent	Response Count	
18-25		10.0%	1	
26-40		50.0%	5	
41-60		30.0%	3	
61-80		10.0%	1	
81-100		0.0%	0	
		answered question	10	
		skipped question	0	
5. Would you come to any of these activities?		Create Chart	Download	
		Yes	No	Response Count
Friday Night Movies for Adults		77.8% (7)	22.2% (2)	9
Live Theater Performances		70.0% (7)	30.0% (3)	10
Book Clubs		88.9% (8)	11.1% (1)	9
Video Game Club		33.3% (3)	66.7% (6)	9
Live Concert Series		70.0% (7)	30.0% (3)	10
Exercise Classes		50.0% (5)	50.0% (5)	10
Advanced Technology Courses		60.0% (6)	40.0% (4)	10
		If no, Why? Show Responses		6
		answered question		10
		skipped question		0
6. What are your favorite activities?		Create Chart	Download	
		Response Percent	Response Count	
Movies		40.0%	4	
Reading		80.0%	8	
Sports		30.0%	3	
Video Games		20.0%	2	
Concerts		20.0%	2	

Arts and Crafts	100.0%	1
Theater	20.0%	2
Internet	70.0%	7
Other (please specify) Show Responses		3
answered question		10
skipped question		0

7. How would you rate the following at your local library?

[Create Chart](#)[Download](#)

	Excellent	Average	Needs Improvement	Rating Average	Response Count
Customer Service	40.0% (4)	60.0% (6)	0.0% (0)	1.60	10
Friendliness of Librarians	30.0% (3)	70.0% (7)	0.0% (0)	1.70	10
Variety of Books	40.0% (4)	50.0% (5)	10.0% (1)	1.70	10
Offering of Digital Downloads	20.0% (2)	80.0% (8)	0.0% (0)	1.80	10
Comfort of Furniture	0.0% (0)	70.0% (7)	30.0% (3)	2.30	10
Safe Environment	20.0% (2)	70.0% (7)	10.0% (1)	1.90	10
Cleanliness	20.0% (2)	60.0% (6)	20.0% (2)	2.00	10
answered question					10
skipped question					0

8. What would make the library a more popular place for those in your age group to go to?

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	Response Count
Show Responses	10
answered question	10
skipped question	0

9. Did you have any trouble completing this survey? If so, do you have any recommendations for our survey team?

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	Response Count
Show Responses	7
answered question	7
skipped question	3